

"There Are No Indian Princesses," Says Mrs. Croker

The Ex-Tammany Boss's Wife Declares Press Agents Gave Her the Title

TO SAY that Mrs. Richard Croker, Indian wife of the former chief of Tammany, is no longer a princess would be incorrect. The proper way to put it is that she never was a princess. Moreover, she does not know where Churchill's is.

Both of these statements are her own under oath. They were made by her as a witness in the trial in Palm Beach of the family squabble over whether Richard Croker is competent to manage his own affairs. One of the ways Croker's children have adopted to prove their father's incompetence has been to seek to discredit his wife, and now that she has the opportunity to defend herself in court Mrs. Croker welcomes the chance.

Far from being ashamed of her Indian blood, Mrs. Croker glories in it, but when it comes to the claim of royalty, that is an entirely different matter.

No Such Titles Now

"I never claimed to be an Indian princess," she said. "Such a claim from me would be absurd, for no one knows better than I that titles of that kind have not been in use among the Cherokees for many generations."

She does not deny, however, that the title was conferred on her for publicity purposes. "I think the explanation of the use of the term in New York is simple," she said. "The phrase was invented by newspaper writers."

When it came to the question of Churchill's, Mrs. Croker said:

"It has been said that I was a cabaret entertainer and made my debut at Churchill's, and that I was in the chorus of the Hippodrome. I was never in Churchill's in my life. I see the place advertised in New York papers, but I do not even know where it is located. From the time of my return to New York until our marriage I was engaged in giving concerts and recitals in that city."

It is in conversation rather than on the witness stand that Mrs. Croker best tells the story of her life. As related in answers to the questions of the attorneys it is fragmentary and disconnected and touches only or chiefly upon those points raised in the bill of complaint. The nature of the legal proceeding forbids the presentation of some of the most human documents and some of the most interesting statements. At her home, the Wigwam, three miles south of Palm Beach, within sound of the surf beating on the sand, with records and other data at hand, Mrs. Croker talked freely of every incident of her life and supplied details lacking from the court reporter's notes.

The First Attack

"First he tried to attack me through my mother's family," Mrs. Croker said, beginning her narrative—she referred to her stepson, Richard Croker jr., whose management of his father's interests under a power of attorney is claimed as the cause of the legal fight in which father and son are engaged. The senior Mr. Croker has referred to his son Howard as "Richard's messenger boy"; the daughter, who resides in New York (Mrs. Tom White), supports her brother in the suits, but it is Richard jr. who is regarded by Richard Croker and his wife as the instigator of all the trouble.

"Richard's wife had told me that he was looking up my record," I told her I was glad of it, for it would put a stop to innuendoes.

"At Richard's instigation slanderous stories were printed about me in the New York papers. The stories were given out after my husband and I sailed for Ireland in June of last year. In those stories it was said that I was a Jewess, that I misrepresented my race, my ancestry and my age; that I made my debut at Churchill's, and that I was a circus rider at the Hippodrome. I did not see the papers until after we got to Ireland. The stories were—what do you newspaper men say?—cold. It was a month before I could reply to those slanders. Had I written a denial New York people would not know what I was talking about."

"My position was a difficult one. I could not speak ill of my children to my husband; I had too much love and esteem for him to add anything to his distress. And yet these charges stood uncontradicted by me at that time. These slanders were being circulated against me in the United States when I was in Ireland."

Her Difficult Position

"I had no wish to bring suits against any of Mr. Croker's children; Mr. Croker had always been averse to suits. And so the matter rested."

"It was a great relief to me when, finally, Richard brought the suit against me and my husband here in



MRS. RICHARD CROKER in the costume of an Indian maiden. Mrs. Croker denies she ever claimed to be an Indian princess

Indian Philosophy

"Indians know character. They do not judge people by what they say, but by how they act. An Indian notices how people stand; they do not like people who stand with legs apart. The habitual attitude of an Indian is the listening attitude, with head up. Indians notice how people use their hands. They do not like people who gesture with their hands down or out, for Indians gesture with their hands up. The Indian walks with his head up, listening to the birds and the animals and looking at the tree tops. It was by things like this that I judged Mr. Croker."

"I never heard of corrective gymnastics until I left Oklahoma and went to Boston. In our race there are no spinal troubles. When an Indian mother sees her child stooping and with head down she says: 'Are you an animal, that you walk that way?' and the child straightens up. Thus Indians walk uprightly."

"And so I married Mr. Croker. But I asked him how his children would feel about it, and he said they were all well provided for; they were all married or soon would be. I had no desire to figure in family quarrels. My husband talked to me of his children later, when there were disagreements; of course he did. We do not conceal things from one another. And I heard him without comment, and changed the subject. But was I to join with his children in attacks on my husband? Finally I became outspoken. It was when his daughter called him a liar. What was an Indian girl, with training such as mine, to think of a daughter or a son who called the father a liar?"

"I trust I have a moral sense and religious feeling. At least I know the Indian philosophy, and there is an Indian philosophy, fantastic as it may seem to you. I learned it from my mother, the Indian woman. The Indian attitude is the listening attitude; he walks with head erect. He did not stoop, even to delve in the ground, and he got his living from the fruits of trees and the birds of the air. He looked into nature and listened to the voice of nature. I had heard no such unnatural thing as the voice of a daughter calling a father a liar!"

Her Life Story

Pieced together from the testimony given on direct examination, under the friendly tutelage of her attorney, and on a cross-examination conducted by the attorney for Richard Croker jr., who attacks the competency of his father and the reputation of his stepmother, and her statements in conversation and the records of her life with which she has provided herself, Mrs. Croker's life story runs like this:

On her father's side she is a descendant of the Archibald Edmondson or Edmunstone (they were careless of spelling in those days) who a long time ago bought a seventy-acre tract of land from Lord Baltimore, the parchment deed for which she has and exhibited in court. Her grandfather was A. V. Edmondson, who married Laura Denman; the grandfather moved from North Carolina to Georgia, where Bula Edmondson Croker's father was born. From Georgia the Edmondson family went to Texas. On a visit to his friend, Robert Wylie, in the Cherokee Nation, the widower Edmondson married Nancy Adair, an Indian school teacher. One of their sons was Michael Smith Edmondson, who married Florence Williams Hastings, relative of one of the Congressmen from Oklahoma.

In the distribution of the estate of her grandfather, Mrs. Croker's father, Michael Smith, got no share, the estate going to half-brothers, in consequence of which Turner Ed-



MR. AND MRS. RICHARD CROKER out for a walk on Fifth Avenue

about a week later. I personally know Mrs. Croker to be a very good-hearted woman, who always had a smile and a glad hand for all of her friends. Hoping to hear from you and Mrs. Croker, I remain, cordially yours,

BORIS GOLDBREYER.

"And here," Mrs. Croker said, "is a clipping from The New York Evening Mail, of Tuesday, March 25, 1913, soon after I went to that city from the Wilson inaugural, with the story referred to in the letter. The article is headed, 'Pretty Cherokee Heiress Writes Poetry, Wants to Vote and Be an Actress.' I was no more responsible for the reference to me as an 'Indian princess' than as a 'Cherokee heiress.'"

Her Parentage

Mrs. Croker was born February 17, 1884, in that part of the then Indian Territory which has since been made Delaware County, Oklahoma, with the town of Jay as the county seat. Some years after the Civil War the remnants of the tribe of Delaware Indians brought "head rights" with the Cherokees and were removed to that

Her Life Story Told on the Witness Stand in the Hearing at Palm Beach

line, and Maysville, Ark., was the postoffice from which the Edmondson family was served. Grove was the town on the Indian Territory side nearest the Edmondson place. Mrs. Croker exhibited a photograph of the house in which her family lived and in which she was born. Shown in the picture are her father and mother and one of her two sisters.

In what is now the adjoining County of Cherokee is located Tahlequah, the capital of the Cherokee Nation and seat of the seminary maintained out of tribal funds for the education of the young women of the nation. At the age of fourteen Bula Croker began in this school the four-year course, which she completed with her graduation in 1902. On the wall of the Crokers' house, the Wigwam at Palm Beach is the framed diploma issued to her in that year, signed in regular fashion, and Maysville, Ark., was the postoffice from which the Edmondson family was served. Grove was the town on the Indian Territory side nearest the Edmondson place. Mrs. Croker exhibited a photograph of the house in which her family lived and in which she was born. Shown in the picture are her father and mother and one of her two sisters.

Hotel, conducted exclusively for women. She had made the acquaintance of Alice Harriman, an author and publisher, a copy of whose autographed volume Mrs. Croker exhibited to the court. It was suggested to Bula Edmondson by Alice Harriman that she prepare for publication a volume of Indian legends, and, as Mrs. Harriman was living at the Gerard Hotel, Miss Edmondson moved from the Martha Washington to the Gerard.

In the meantime she had made application to be admitted to the Girls' Studio Club, 35 East Sixty-second Street, which had been recommended to her by acquaintances made in Boston. She secured as her music teacher a Miss Case, now married and under the name of Vaughn living in Oregon. Later she was a pupil of Oscar Saenger.

It was to Mrs. Vaughn in Oregon that Richard Croker jr. sent the "spy" who visited Oklahoma in the investigation of Bula Croker. Mrs. Vaughn made an affidavit that was attached to the bill of complaint on which the suit was brought. Mrs. Croker produced in court letters from Mrs. Vaughn written since taking up residence in Oregon in which Mrs. Croker is addressed affectionately. There has been a good deal of testimony, oral and in affidavits, as to Miss Case, or Mrs. Vaughn. Mrs. Croker's attorneys feel that the Vaughn affidavit has been utterly discredited. Saenger has made an affidavit vigorously defending Mrs. Croker's behavior.

Lectured to Schools

During the summer of 1914 Bula Edmondson gave lectures at camps in New England and New York State conducted by the principals of girls' schools. Every day of this period is covered by affidavits read into the record by Mrs. Croker's attorneys.

"In my work in New York City and elsewhere it was sometimes necessary for me to go to hotels," Mrs. Croker says, "but the hotel registers will show in every case that I was properly chaperoned."

"It has been said that I met Mr. Croker in a park and attracted his attention by winking at him, and that I was a cabaret entertainer and made my debut at Churchill's, and that I was in the chorus of the Hippodrome. Mr. Croker has already testified that we met at the Studio Club, where he came accompanied by a friend. I was never in Churchill's in my life. I see the place advertised in New York papers, but I do not even know where it is located."

"From the time of my return to New York City until our marriage I was engaged in giving concerts and recitals in that city. Mr. Croker attended one of my recitals at a public school in Manhattan."

Mr. Croker, who sat at hand, nodded and gave the place and date.

"They try to make a good deal out of it that I decline to say who introduced me and Mr. Croker. (They) refers to Richard Croker jr. and his attorneys. I withheld that partly for mischievousness; they are trying to find out so much about me; let them find that out for themselves. But there is another reason for withholding the information. I may find it desirable to bring a suit myself, and if I am to do so I shall not provide them in advance with testimony with which to defend my suit. I shall be Bula Croker's witness, not theirs."

"I have told them where I met Mr. Croker and that is enough."

The Question of Age

"They say I misrepresented my age. Not to Mr. Croker—they know how foolish that would be—but in something that had to do with the marriage license. Mr. P. J. Scully brought the license to the house—to Nathan Straus's house—or anyhow he came there, and he and my uncle, W. W. Hastings, the Congressman from Oklahoma, who came up from Washington to attend the wedding, had some conversation. I did not furnish any information on which the license was issued. I suppose I signed something, though I do not recall if there was pen and ink at hand; some one may have handed me a fountain pen. We were all rather upset, like at most weddings, I guess, and I was busy answering the telephone and meeting people. My age is a matter of record on the Indian rolls. I had no reason to conceal it or deny it."

"They speak of my father as squaw man, as if that were discreditable; they say it who do not know the meaning of the term. A squaw is an Indian mother."

"Mr. Croker married an Indian maiden. I'd like to ask the court if my husband shall be called a 'squaw man'?"



MRS. RICHARD CROKER when she was Miss Bula Edmondson

The Einstein Theory Explained for Laymen

Continued from preceding page

or forty years that the perihelion of the planet Mercury, after allowance had been made for the perturbations due to the attraction of the other planets, was actually moving slowly forward in a manner which was very difficult to explain. Attempts to account for it have failed.

The Case of Mercury

For example, the attraction of an unknown planet between Mercury and the sun would do the trick, but observations made during eclipses of the sun show that there is no planet there. Nor can there be a great number of small bodies whose combined attraction would do it, for these would reflect so much sunlight as to produce a bright region in the sky, which again would have been observed during eclipses.

The discrepancy remained very puzzling until Einstein's theory appeared, and this theory predicts not only the fact and the direction of the discrepancy, but its exact amount, bringing observation and calculation into beautiful accordance.

The similar effects for the other planets are so small that they are at the very limit of measurement, but even so, the Einstein theory appears to fit the facts better than the old theory.

Recent Experiments

This remarkable success deeply impressed astronomers and set every one waiting with keen interest the result of the observations made to determine whether rays of light passing near the sun were deflected.

To settle this question it is necessary to photograph stars in the immediate neighborhood of the sun, and this can be done only at the time of a total eclipse, when the moon completely hides the sun and enables us to observe the stars on a nearly dark sky.

Fortunately, the eclipse of May, 1919, afforded a very favorable opportunity for such observations. The sun was eclipsed for more than four minutes and was situated at the time in a region of the heavens remarkably full of stars bright enough to be easily photographed.

In spite of the short interval since the conclusion of the war, English astronomers rose to the occasion and sent two expeditions, one to Brazil and the other to an island off the African coast, equipped with photographic instruments of high power and especially suited for the work. By extraordinary good fortune the weather was clear enough at both stations to allow the obtaining of valuable results.

Every precaution was taken to secure accuracy. For example, after the eclipse the telescope was left in place for nearly two months so that the same stars might be photographed upon a dark sky, after the sun had moved out of the way, to obtain plates showing their ordinary positions to use for comparison with the eclipse plates.

As Einstein Predicted

The photographs were brought to England and measured with the greatest care, and the result indicates that the apparent shift of the stars due to the deviation of the light is unquestionably present and is of very nearly, if not exactly, the amount predicted by Einstein, the difference between the observed and calculated amounts being hardly greater than the very small error which is still inherent, even in these precise observations.

The observers, Professor Eddington, of Cambridge, and Dr. Crommelin, of the Greenwich Observatory, are men of the highest standing, and their results prove beyond a doubt the reality of the predicted effect.

The older form of the theory of relativity was based upon the result of very precise observations, but upon negative results—upon the failure to find things which ought to have been found, and easily found, provided that the older theories had been correct.

But the new extension of the theory is based upon positive results—the presence of an effect, in the case of the planet Mercury, which, though long known, baffled all explanation, and in the case of the eclipse observations, upon the presence of an unquestionable and very remarkable influence, whose existence no one anticipated or imagined until it was predicted by the theory.

It therefore appears to be very strongly established.

It is true that the original form of Einstein's theory also predicted that the position of the lines of any element, such as iron, in the solar spectrum should be slightly different from those produced by the same element in the laboratory. At the present time it is very hard to say whether this effect has been observed or not.

Things Still Unexplained

The positions of the lines in the spectrum can indeed be measured very accurately. But there are a variety of influences at work on the sun's surface, which may shift the positions of these lines, such as the pressure in the sun's atmosphere, actual motion of this atmosphere and possibly a host of other things, so that different lines of the same element are shifted by different amounts, and in spite of years of investigation of this exceedingly complex problem it is not possible yet to explain all the things that have been observed.

It is, therefore, still uncertain whether, after these other causes are allowed for, it would be found that the lines in the sun's spectrum were shifted or not. It seems probable, however, that Einstein's theory could be modified in such a manner as to account for the other effects already observed without demanding the existence of this one. Hence this can hardly be called at the present time a failure of the Einstein theory.

The mathematical expression of this last portion of Einstein's theory is the part which is so intricate and difficult.

Mathematicians whose minds are saturated with conceptions with which the layman is utterly unfamiliar find that these mathematical expressions may be (to them at least) most simply described in terms of space of four dimensions, or even of five dimensions in certain cases.

Was School Principal

To perfect herself for teaching, Bula Edmondson went to Chicago and took a summer school course in the University of Chicago. On her return she taught mathematics for five years in the institution from which she was graduated. During the school year of 1908 she was principal of the Sequoyah public schools, with eight teachers under her direction.

All this is attested in the fifty affidavits that have been read into the record, with the statements of ex-Governors of Oklahoma, Congressmen and judges of the Oklahoma Supreme Court, who attended exercises at the Cherokee Seminary for Young Women and there met Bula Edmondson and heard her in recitations, songs and lectures.

The instruction in the customs of her people she had heard from her mother—together with that Indian philosophy to which she has referred—and the legends of the Cherokees she had listened to in the words of the full-bloods created in her a desire to make these legends and customs known to larger audiences. For three years she was a student in the school of expression at Boston, conducted by Samuel Silas Curry. Curry's affidavit as to her conduct and character reposes each day of the hearing in the big pile of papers filed in the case. He affirms her good behavior and her industry.

She went back to the old Indian Territory division of Oklahoma in 1911 or 1912—the writer's notes are not clear on the date—after three years spent in Boston. In 1912 she conducted a studio in Muskogee, Okla. Interest in the suffrage movement had been aroused during her stay in Boston. The success of the Democratic party in 1912 added to her interest in politics. Her uncle was a member of Congress, and in the spring of 1913 she closed the Muskogee studio and joined a party of Oklahoma people, men and women, in a trip to Washington to attend the first inaugural of President Wilson. She rode in the suffrage parade, clothed in the Cherokee Indian costume. To go on to New York and continue her studies in music was one of the reasons for closing the Muskogee studio, so to New York she went from Washington.

To New York

Arrived in New York, she registered at the Martha Washington